



Michigan Department of Agriculture

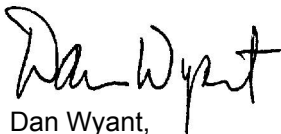
Key Priorities and Programs 2003

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Introduction

The Michigan Department of Agriculture, created in 1921, serves, promotes and protects the food, agricultural, environmental and economic interests of the people of Michigan.

The Department, one of the smaller agencies in state government with an approximate general fund budget of \$38 million and 550 full-time employees, oversees or administers a wide and diverse array of programs that in some way impact all of us, every day. This booklet provides a brief overview of some of these key programs and highlights MDA's top priorities of ensuring food safety and security; environmental stewardship; animal and plant health and protection; a viable agricultural economy; consumer protection; and homeland security.



Dan Wyant,
Director

Snapshot of Michigan's Food & Agriculture Industry

Agriculture in Michigan contributes \$37 billion annually to the state's economy, making it the second-largest industry. Production agriculture and food processing employ about 500,000 Michigan residents.

Michigan produces over 125 commodities on a commercial basis, making the state second only to California in agricultural diversity.

Michigan leads the nation in the production of nine commodities (including tart cherries, blueberries, cucumbers for processing, geraniums and many varieties of dry beans) and ranks in the top 10 of 28 other commodities.

Dairy is the largest segment of Michigan agriculture, according to production value (at more than \$800 million annually). It is followed by the floriculture and plant industry (\$472 million annually).

Michigan exports about one-third of its agricultural commodities each year. In 1999, the state exported nearly \$800 million of agricultural products. Ag exports account for approximately 25 percent of the value of Michigan farm receipts. Michigan ranks 5th and 7th nationally in exports of fruits and vegetables respectively. Michigan's largest export commodity is soybean and soy products, which was valued at \$240 million in 1999.

Michigan has about 10.4 million acres of farmland, and the state is home to 52,000 farms, averaging 200 acres each. We have seen growth in small farms over the past two years as well as large farms. More than 40 percent of the state's total farmland is in some form of preservation agreement.

Food Safety and Security

Ensuring a Seamless, Streamlined Food Safety System

- Michigan's food safety program is unique and comprehensive because all its programs covering farm to table food regulation (animal health, feed, pesticides, food processing, dairy, meat, eggs, and retail food and food service) are housed in one agency, the Michigan Department of Agriculture. Only one other state (Pennsylvania) has consolidated its programs in a similar fashion. Such a system helps ensure all-encompassing, coordinated and uniform regulations and actions.

Working Under a New, Comprehensive Michigan Food Law

- MDA has completely overhauled all of its food safety laws and regulations covering food and dairy products within the past three years. More than 25 laws and regulations have been updated and consolidated into three major laws, with more focus on preventing foodborne illnesses.



Stepping up Food Security Surveillance Efforts

- Recent federal allocations will help MDA increase its sampling and testing of raw and processed fruits and vegetables for both pesticide residues and foodborne pathogens like *E. coli* and Salmonella. MDA is working to enhance its food safety and security efforts, especially in light of potential agri-terrorism threats after the attacks of Sept. 11. An additional benefit will be the increased ability to trace food products to their origin and develop appropriate mitigation strategies to prevent potential pesticide or pathogen contamination in the future. The Department is also working at the national level to develop coordinated emergency preparedness strategies and has shared food security information and recommendations with Michigan food industry associations and commodity organizations.

Using Technology to Enhance Food Safety

- MDA recently finalized its electronic, web-based food inspection system called "e-Inspector." Food inspectors throughout the state enter inspection data directly into the system via laptop computers, which is uploaded regularly into a central database, allowing immediate access to food safety information. e-Inspector provides an invaluable tool for MDA to make decisions about the relative risk of every retail food establishment in the state; from where to locate inspectors and schedule inspections, to how often establishments need inspection and flagging facilities for possible enforcement actions.



Preventing and Responding to Foodborne Illnesses

- MDA recently spearheaded the rollout of the state's Foodborne Illness Response Strategy (FIRST). FIRST was developed in collaboration with the Michigan Department of Community Health and the Michigan Association for Local Public Health to improve the state's coordination during foodborne illness outbreaks and to minimize their impacts. It features a detailed resource manual and establishes protocol for identifying outbreaks early and implementing effective control measures promptly to prevent further human illness. Additionally, MDA has provided extensive training to food and dairy inspectors and local health departments in foodborne illness investigation techniques.

During a typical year, MDA inspects about 17,500 licensed food establishments, including supermarkets, convenience stores and food processing operations. The Department also inspects about 3,500 dairy farms, dairy processing plants and bulk milk haulers to ensure the safety and quality of dairy products. MDA, in partnership with 45 local health departments, oversees food service sanitation for Michigan's 47,000 food service establishments, including restaurants, cafeterias, temporary food vendors and commissaries.

Environmental Stewardship

Advancing the Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program

- The Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) is one of the state's newest and most innovative initiatives to help prevent agriculture-related pollution. It ensures that participating producers are using effective stewardship practices that comply with state and federal environmental laws and standards. The proactive, comprehensive program provides education, on-farm technical assistance, environmental risk assessments, and action plans that are site and farm specific. Once these action plans are developed and implemented, MDA conducts a thorough on-farm inspection to ensure that all requirements are met. If so, the farm becomes "environmentally assured." To retain this designation, the farm must be inspected at least every three years. Ongoing plan review and implementation are key to continued verification. To date, hundreds of farms are in the process of becoming MAEAP verified. The program aims to have all farms, no matter what size or type (livestock, crop, fruit and/or vegetable, etc.), participate statewide. MAEAP is also an integral component in ensuring that the state's larger livestock farms are complying with environmental laws and engaging in environmentally-sound practices. In fact, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are currently implementing a new requirement that all Michigan farms over 1,000 animal units (CAFOs – Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations) obtain a permit OR participate in MAEAP if they meet certain conditions. Part of this effort entails on-farm inspections by the DEQ and MDA, approximately 100/year.



Preserving Farmland and Open Spaces

- MDA currently operates two main programs that work to preserve farmland and open spaces: the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Act, commonly known as "P.A. 116," and the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program. Recent tax incentive changes to P.A. 116 have significantly increased new enrollments and also reduced the amount of land set to expire out of it. Specifically, 2002 alone saw 316 new applicants while the average for the years 1997-2000 was 155. Currently, the state holds more than 50,000 of these agreements, preserving over 4.3 million acres of farmland – about 40 percent of Michigan's 10.4 million acres of agricultural production land. In fact, Michigan ranks third in the nation in the number of acres protected by this type of agreement. The PDR program offers an alternative method for protecting farmland by purchasing the development rights in perpetuity on selected parcels of land across the state, permanently restricting any non-agricultural development. Since the program began, Michigan has acquired 61 development rights easements, eight of which have been donated, protecting over 14,300 acres at an investment of more than \$26 million. Out of the 19 states with similar programs, Michigan ranks 9th in the number of acres protected. Additionally, the Michigan Agricultural Preservation Fund Board (comprised of a diverse nine-member group of

stakeholders representing agriculture, conservation, local unit of government, realtor, homebuilder, and university interests), staffed by MDA, is in the midst of finalizing its standards, guidelines, application process and scoring system for selecting grant applications from local units of government for community PDR programs. This proposal differs from the state PDR program in that it is driven by local community initiatives.

Implementing the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

- CREP implements environmentally sound practices on agricultural lands to improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and enhance wildlife habitat. Nearly 2,000 farmers have already enrolled more than 61,000 acres in three priority watersheds (Lake Macatawa, River Raisin and Saginaw Bay). More conservation has been put on the land in these three CREP watersheds in the program's first two years than all federal conservation programs for the last five years statewide. Specifically, more than 2,700 miles – or about the distance from New York City to Los Angeles, CA – of 100-foot wide filter strips and riparian buffers have been implemented, as well as 17,000 acres of wetlands restored and 9,000 acres of native and introduced grasses planted. CREP has leveraged over \$60 million in federal funds to establish environmentally-protective practices and incentives in 29 counties in Michigan. It is the largest voluntary environmental improvement program in the state's history and represents the significant pollution prevention and water quality and wildlife habitat enhancements that can be accomplished with collaboration between the state and federal government and industry partners.



Enhancing Groundwater Protection

- MDA's Michigan Groundwater Stewardship Program (MGSP) has achieved success and national recognition as one of the most effective and efficient groundwater protection programs in the country. It has provided one-on-one technical assistance to nearly 11,500 farmers to help them identify risks to groundwater associated with their pesticide and nitrogen fertilizer use practices, and it coordinates local, state, and federal resources to help individuals reduce those risks. Two key components of the program are Clean Sweep and Pesticide Container Recycling, which work jointly to collect and properly dispose of outdated pesticides that may cause potential harm to the environment and to recycle containers that burden landfills. The program, in cooperation with county and local units of government, has also established 16 permanent Clean Sweep sites located throughout the state. More than 340 tons of outdated or unused pesticides and mercury have been removed from circulation and properly disposed of at these sites, and more than 390,000 pounds of containers have been properly recycled. Because of MGSP, 5,700 abandoned wells have also been properly decommissioned.

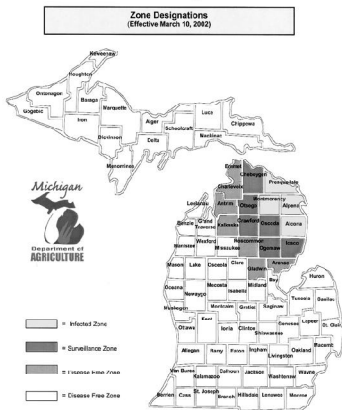
Ensuring a Farmer's Right to Farm

- Michigan's Right to Farm law is one of the strongest in the country and serves as a national model. It ensures sound environmental stewardship while simultaneously recognizing the importance of a farmer's right to farm. Michigan farmers receive protection from nuisance lawsuits by following scientifically-based Generally Accepted Agricultural Management Practices (GAAMPs), which are reviewed and updated annually. Since 1991, MDA has responded to nearly 1,600 complaints, with about 98 percent resolved without legal action in a common sense, effective manner that is also protective of the environment. To help reduce conflicts between farmers and non-farm neighbors and ensure the proper siting of animal agriculture facilities, a new GAAMP – Site Selection and Odor Control at New or Expanding Livestock Production Facilities, was developed and implemented in 2000 to improve the Right to Farm program. The site approval process considers an area's population density, environmental conditions and impacts on neighboring land uses.



Animal, Plant Health and Protection

Eradicating Bovine Tuberculosis



- MDA, in strong partnership with the Michigan departments of Community Health and Natural Resources (DNR), the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Michigan State University, private veterinary practitioners, the state's livestock industry, and hunters, have made great strides toward eradicating bovine TB from Michigan. The state, with tremendous cooperation from federal, state and private veterinarians and its farmers, has tested nearly 832,400 cattle, goats, bison and privately owned cervids (deer and elk) statewide to date. In addition, the DNR has examined more than 105,500 white-tailed deer for the disease. Due to this thorough and aggressive testing of livestock and wildlife, Michigan has been able to confirm that bovine TB is concentrated in a small area of Northeast Lower Michigan and has refocused its resources

accordingly. In addition, these efforts have laid the groundwork for MDA to establish distinct zones statewide, which is the first step to obtaining split state status from the federal government and allowing most of Michigan to regain TB-free status as soon as possible.

Implementing a Surveillance and Response Strategy for Chronic Wasting Disease

- Under Michigan law, captive or privately owned cervids are considered livestock or farmed deer and elk and as such fall under MDA's jurisdiction. Specifically, MDA oversees the licensing, registration and inspection of the state's approximately 800 privately owned cervid operations. Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a fatal disease of white-tailed deer, mule deer and elk that attacks the central nervous system. It has not been found in Michigan to date and there is no evidence that it affects humans or other animals. However, it has recently been detected in Wisconsin and other Great Lakes states and is emerging as a disease that has the potential to significantly impact both privately owned and wild cervids and cripple segments of the state's agriculture, hunting and tourism industries. Because of this threat, MDA and DNR, with input from university researchers, the agriculture industry and outdoor and hunting organizations, have formed a strong partnership to review, develop, enhance and implement comprehensive CWD surveillance (testing of animals to determine the presence/absence and extent of disease), testing and prevention actions. In addition, as an emergency preparedness measure, the state has designed a detailed response/contingency plan should CWD be found in Michigan. Some of MDA's CWD prevention activities to date include: continuing a moratorium on imports of deer and elk; tracing back and testing all animals imported over the past three years from Wisconsin or other CWD-confirmed origin; and conducting mandatory surveillance and testing of all death losses from privately owned cervid herds, estimated to be approximately 1,700 to 2,000 animals yearly. To date, MDA has tested 603 deer and elk from 53 counties for the disease, all of which have been negative.

Responding to Emerald Ash Borer

- In the summer of 2002, a new exotic insect was identified in six counties – Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, Washtenaw and Wayne – in Southeast Michigan. This pest, known as the Emerald Ash Borer, is an invasive species originally from Asia and previously unknown in North America that affects ash trees. It has also been detected in Windsor, Canada. To date, it has killed or damaged millions of ash trees in these



affected counties. To prevent and control the spread of the borer, initial aggressive steps were taken, including an MDA-issued quarantine on all ash trees and products in the affected counties. Under this quarantine, it is illegal to move ash trees, branches, lumber, firewood and wood chips larger than one inch in diameter outside these six counties. Additionally, very little information on the beetle exists from its native region and limited control or management options exist to date. To help effectively control and eradicate the Emerald Ash Borer, and to minimize its damage and threat to Michigan and North America ash resources, the state has an active Emerald Ash Borer Task Force in place. Members include MDA, DNR, Michigan State University, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service and Forest Service, in cooperation with local units of government and various industry groups, associations, and universities. This group is now working to finalize a comprehensive, long-term management and eradication strategy, which includes components of regulatory/quarantine enforcement, ongoing surveys, research, infested tree removal and disposal, tree replacement/restoration, and education and outreach, and to identify and secure federal funding to successfully implement this strategy.

Ensuring State-of-the-Art Diagnostic and Scientific Capabilities

- MDA's Geagley Laboratory, recently renovated and updated with the latest technology, plays a key role in meeting a wide array of testing and diagnostic needs of the state's food and agriculture industry, including: testing animal feeds and fertilizers to ensure they meet label claims; testing seeds for purity, germination rate and presence of noxious weeds and certifying plant material for



the absence of viral diseases; testing animal blood for the presence of diseases like brucellosis, pseudorabies, equine infectious anemia and paratuberculosis or Johne's disease; and testing blood and urine from race horses at Michigan racetracks for the presence of drugs or other substances. Additionally, the state allocated \$58 million for the construction of a new laboratory, the

Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health, to replace an outdated similar facility and to ensure the long-term capability of the state to effectively handle emerging animal and public health issues. The laboratory, housed on the campus of Michigan State University and slated for completion in the fall/winter of 2003, will help Michigan identify, track and eradicate diseases like CWD, bovine TB and West Nile virus. It also will help address other important needs and issues like food safety and export requirements as well as potential acts of bioterrorism and foreign animal diseases like Foot and Mouth.

Managing and Preventing Plant Pests, Invasive Species and Foreign Animal Diseases

- MDA has field inspectors and veterinarians located throughout the state who work to manage or prevent the introduction of plant pests or plant and animal diseases. For example, the Department inspects nursery stock and agricultural commodities being transported within Michigan or heading to another state or foreign country to ensure materials are free of any injurious plant pest or disease. MDA annually inspects and issues about 2,000 certificates certifying exports to nearly 60 countries worldwide and inspects approximately 15,000 acres of nursery stock. In 2002, MDA conducted 272 inspections to ensure compliance with federal Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) animal feed regulations and ensure the country remains BSE free.

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Promoting and Adding Value to Michigan Agriculture

Expanding Value-Added Initiatives

- Helping farmers and the agriculture industry add more value to Michigan grown or processed agriculture commodities is a continued focus of MDA. This may include turning soybeans into soybean meal and oil, turning corn into ethanol with the recently opened plant in Caro, or starting up a grower-owned, value-added processing cooperative to save the Michigan Sugar Company in the Thumb or like the Michigan Turkey Producers Cooperative, Inc. in Wyoming. MDA also works closely with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Michigan State University, USDA Rural Development, the agriculture industry, and local organizations to help attract, expand or retain food processing companies as well as develop new products and markets for Michigan commodities. Michigan also has a mechanism, the Julian-Stille Value-Added Agriculture Development Fund, to assist agriculture development projects. Through this mechanism and federal funding, MDA selected 28 projects in 2002 to share more than \$1 million in federally-funded state grant dollars, which leveraged nearly \$2 million of private investment dollars, to create, enhance or expand agriculture development ventures across the state.

Developing International and Domestic Markets

- MDA strives to promote the export of Michigan commodities and value-added goods by helping identify, facilitate and develop new domestic and new market development. Exporting continues to be critical to Michigan agriculture as nearly one-third of what the state grows is sold in foreign markets. Through several international marketing programs, Michigan food and agriculture companies/organizations have been able to significantly increase or develop their overseas markets and leverage private and federal dollars on an impressive 4 to 1 basis. For example, 10 of 18 food processors utilizing one program have reported a noteworthy increase of over \$6 million in sales and the Michigan Bean Industry Commission, utilizing grants to develop certain overseas markets, has increased sales by a whopping 2000 percent to Costa Rica (from \$35,000 in 2000 to \$742,521 in 2001) and 308 percent in the Middle East (from \$41,759 in 2000 to \$170,381 in 2001).



Creating Agricultural Alliances

- MDA strives to foster alliances with producers, industry organizations and other agencies to ensure coordinated and strong cooperative efforts regarding particular issues and initiatives. Because of the state's agricultural diversity and these effective partnerships, the federal government also recently allocated a \$3.75 million block grant program to MDA to administer and provide resources for Michigan specialty crop producers and commodity organizations. Through this funding, more than 6,000 farmers have been directly impacted and various market development has occurred, including a \$300,000 sale of Michigan dry beans to Cuba and the Mexican market being opened for the first time to Michigan apples.

Helping Market Michigan Grown and Processed Commodities

- MDA administers the Agricultural Commodities Marketing Act (Public Act 232 of 1965) and other similar assessment and check-off programs for 15 commodity organizations. Through these efforts, nearly \$10.1 million of producer dollars is approved and spent on various promotion and marketing activities of these commodities, which include apples, asparagus, beans, beef, carrots, cherries, corn, cranberries, dairy products, deer and elk, onions, plums, potatoes, soybeans and veal. Additionally, MDA will build upon its domestic marketing efforts with the 2003 launch of the “Select a Taste of Michigan Local and Organic Foods” program, aimed at helping consumers and businesses identify and buy Michigan homegrown and organic foods, made possible by federal and private funding.

Growing Michigan’s Grape and Wine Industry

- Michigan’s grape and wine industry has experienced tremendous growth in recent years. The state has 13,500 acres of vineyards, making Michigan the fourth largest grape-growing state, and is now home to 32 commercial wineries, many of which have tasting rooms and tours. Michigan wineries produce about 200,000 cases of wine each year. These wines continue to win national acclaim and recognition by winning numerous medals at prestigious competitions each year. Preliminary estimates place the economic impact of this industry at \$75 million annually, about \$58.8 million associated with winery production and \$16.6 million related to winery tourism.



Encouraging State, County Fair Participation and Youth Involvement in Agriculture

- Michigan’s 87 county and local fairs, along with the Michigan State Fair in Detroit and the Upper Peninsula State Fair in Escanaba, help keep Michigan residents connected to their agricultural roots. Nearly half of the state’s population attends at least one of Michigan’s fairs each year. The average Michigan fair has 250 volunteers contributing approximately 6,000 hours and \$27,450 of in-kind contributions to help make the fair a success. In addition, youth livestock sales at fairs generate approximately \$9.8 million.

Ensuring the Integrity of the Horse Racing Industry

- In accordance with Michigan law, the Office of Racing Commissioner (ORC) is an independent agency housed within MDA and established to authorize and regulate pari-mutuel horse racing in Michigan. The ORC helps ensure the integrity and success of Michigan’s nearly \$1.2 billion horse racing industry, which represents about 26,200 jobs, through various activities, including: issuing track, race meeting, occupational license, and simulcasting permits; allocating racing dates and simulcasting schedules; collecting racing license and tax revenues; appointing stewards and veterinarians to represent the state; monitoring the daily conduct of live and simulcast racing; conducting equine and human drug testing programs; investigating any irregularities in racing; and developing ways to improve and promote pari-mutuel horse racing in Michigan. Michigan is currently home to seven tracks; one thoroughbred, one mixed breed and five standardbred or harness racing tracks.

Consumer Protection

Preventing Pesticide Misuse and Adverse Health, Environmental Impacts

- MDA, under an agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, is responsible for regulating the safe distribution, sale, and use of pesticides in Michigan. To help protect human health and the environment from potential risks related to pesticide misuse, MDA: conducts pesticide use/misuse investigations; inspects pesticide production and retail facilities to ensure proper labeling and registration of pesticides; licenses pesticide applicator businesses and restricted-use dealers; requires training, examination and certification of commercial pesticide applicators; audits restricted-use pesticide dealer sales and commercial applicator records; addresses pesticide use violations related to food safety and farm worker protection; and implements federal and state compliance monitoring initiatives.

Testing for West Nile Virus and Other Diseases

- MDA, in conjunction with federal, state, and local governments, and other organizations, are conducting disease monitoring for West Nile virus and other mosquito-borne viruses like Eastern Equine Encephalitis and St. Louis Encephalitis infections among bird, mosquito, horse and human populations. MDA helps provide training for local health departments that facilitates disease and vector management, and provides direction in local community decision making regarding source reduction and possible larvicide and pesticide applications. The Department's Geagley Laboratory tests mosquitoes and bird blood, and helps sort and identify mosquitoes in support of these disease monitoring programs.



Inspecting for Gasoline Quality and Quantity

- MDA ensures that gasoline sold in Michigan meets quality and quantity standards, protecting consumers against economic losses and industry against unfair trade practices. The Department maintains a toll-free hotline (1-800-MDA-FUEL), posted on each gasoline pump, for consumers to report suspected gasoline problems. In FY 2002, 4.7 billion gallons of gas were sold in Michigan, more than 800 complaints were received against gasoline retailers, and 10 percent of gasoline failed to meet quality performance standards – improved by 3 percent from the previous year (equating to about 141 million gallons of gas @\$1.25 per gallon = \$176 million).



Ensuring Fairness and Standardization in the Marketplace

- MDA ensures that all transactions based upon weight, measure or count are done fairly and accurately, ensuring that consumers get what they pay for and that businesses are able to compete on a level playing field. In 2002, MDA responded to 800 complaints alleging short weight, short measure or item pricing violations. MDA also inspected over 14,000 devices at more than 3,800 establishments. The Department's Metrology Laboratory is one of the finest and busiest in the nation, supporting the second highest precision mass workload of the 50 states.

Homeland Security

Helping Protect Michigan's Food and Agriculture Industry

- Since Sept. 11, MDA has engaged in an ongoing review of its programs, processes and procedures to help ensure the Department is taking the necessary steps to prepare for and minimize potential terrorist attacks on the state's food supply and other resources. The Department has worked hand in hand with federal, state and local agencies, universities and industry organizations to ensure coordinated and effective plans and activities. Additionally, MDA has worked with many segments of Michigan's food and agriculture industry to help raise awareness of the proactive, comprehensive and common sense precautions they can take to help minimize possible terrorism risks in Michigan. Cornerstones of these efforts are: ensuring aggressive and comprehensive surveillance and inspection systems, effective consumer and industry education and outreach, appropriate scientific and laboratory support, and well-organized emergency preparedness and response. The Department also actively participates in the Michigan Homeland Security Task Force, chairing the Agriculture and Food Supply Subcommittee.



Michigan Commission of Agriculture

The Michigan Commission of Agriculture is a five-member, gubernatorially-appointed board that provides oversight and executive direction for MDA and its programs. The Commission holds regular meetings, many of which are in Lansing, with the remainder held in various locations across the state to gain input and feedback from all segments and areas of the state's food and agriculture industry. All meetings are open to the public and time is set aside on the agenda for public comment. Citizens and/or organizations wishing to observe or discuss matters under the Commission's jurisdiction are encouraged to attend. For meeting dates, times and agenda items, please visit www.michigan.gov/mda or contact the Commission Liaison at (517) 241-0119.

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